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The first inscription readily resolves itself into:

"Ród is mín nama; géo ic ríne cyning bæc, byfigynde, blóde bestémed. þás róde hét Æþelmær wyrican, 7 Adhelwold hys beróþo, Críste tó lofe, for Ælfrices sáule hyra beróþ-or."

And the second into:

"Drahmal iné worhte. Agnus Dei."

Similarly the translation of the Old English would be:

"Rood is my name. Whilom I bore the powerful king, trembling, suffused with blood. This cross Æthelmær had made and Athelwold his brother, to the glory of Christ for the soul of Ælfric their brother."

"Drahmal wrought me."

Logeman, from the evidence of language, inclines to fix the date of the longer inscription at about 1100. That of iconography is less authoritative, but the shorter inscription may be approximately referred to the ninth or tenth century.

How the cross with its silver plate found its way from England to the Continent is another question, into which Logeman enters at some length. Possibly, he thinks, it might be the very piece of the true cross that Pope Marinus sent King Alfred, when, at the request of the king, he freed from taxes and tribute the English school at Rome. The English Chronicle contains the record under 883 and 885 (Earle, pp. 83-4):

"And Marinus pápa sēnde þá lignum dñi Ælfrēde cyngē."

"And þý ilcan géare forþfērde se góða pápa Marinus, se gefrēode Ongelcynnes scole be Ælfrēdes béne Westseaxna cyninges, and hé sēnde him micla gifa, and þære róde dæl þe Críst on þrówude."

For the manner in which Logeman was led to the discovery, the development of his theories, and the presentation of further facts bearing on the subject, the student must be referred to the pamphlet itself, which, originally contained in Vol. xlv of the 'Mémoires couronnés et autres Mémoires' published by the Royal Academy of Belgium, is here published separately as a neat tract of 31 pages, to which are appended two excellent photographic facsimiles.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CHICK, CHICKEN, CHICKENS.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—Many years ago I read in De Vere's 'Studies in English,'

"Our word kitten was originally the plural of *kit*, a diminutive made from *cat*, according to early Gothic usage, the *c* being changed to *k* to preserve its hard sound before the vowel *i*, just as we change *candle* into *kindle*. In like manner *cock* makes first *chick*, and then the plural *chicken*, which we now use as a singular by the side of the former, for 'a pretty chick,' is still a common expression, and 'the old gentleman had neither *chick* nor child,' used by Warren, shows the former meaning. It was only about the time of Wallis, as he tells us himself, that *chicken* began to lose its plural meaning; and we are told that in Sussex, to this day, the people would as soon think of saying *oxens* as *chickens*."

The reference to Dr. Wallis is perhaps sufficiently definite and the somewhat dubious "we are told" is probably owing to the popular character of Professor De Vere's book. Nevertheless later etymologists, among them Professor Skeat, regard the *-en* in *chicken* and *maiden* as diminutive endings found as early as the Gothic. The fact that we have *cicēn* in the A.-S. seems to prove that in some of the Germanic dialects the final *-en* was not a sign of the plural. But it would not be safe to infer from the fragmentary evidence of existing authorities that this is true of all. Under *chick* the 'Oxford Dictionary' says:

"A shortened form of *chicken*. Probably in its origin merely a phonetic development, the final *-n* being, in some dialects, lost, as in the inflexion of nouns and verbs, and the resulting *-e* then disappearing in the ordinary way."

One of the pamphlets of the English Dialect Society says that in some parts of Kent *chicken* is used as a plural of which the singular is *chick*. This puts the word in the same class with *oxen*, *kine*, *hosen*, and several others. The evidence here adduced can hardly be disputed; and yet the fact that Wiclif, has the plural *chykenys*, and 'Piers P.' *chickens*, seems to prove that the statement of Wallis is not true of England as a whole.

It is, of course, possible that the superfluous plural *-en-s* is unique, but the probability would be much greater if one or more analagous

cases could be found. Double plurals as *sus-tren* and *sisters*; *peases* and *peasen*, with many more of the same sort, to say nothing of those in *-en-e* are common enough; this is, however, not nearly the same thing as two endings in one and the same word. But there is, at least, one other double plural, which seems to be unique, namely, *children*. It is of such common occurrence that its history can be traced step by step from its earliest appearance, while the dialectic plural *childer* is still frequently heard. I have even met with the plural *childers*, which is no more illogical than its literary equivalent. On the whole it seems questionable whether it is correct to consider the final syllables in *kitt-en*, *maid-en* and *chick-en* as identical. There is much evidence in favor of regarding the *-en* in *maiden* as a feminine ending occurring in Greek as *-ivva* or *-iva*; in Latin as *-ina*; and in Gothic as *-ein*. The fact that the congeners of *chick* in many of the Germanic dialects append a diminutive syllable, gives color to the notion that the *-en* in English has the same force. On the other hand, there seems little doubt that it was not so regarded everywhere; for it is well known that it performs a variety of functions. It is not likely that the question can ever be definitely decided as to the real nature of this terminal syllable in *chicken*; but it seems safe to assume that it is not the same that occurs in *maiden*. Whatever may have been its ultimate origin it is not unreasonable to suppose that in the course of time the *-en* in *chicken* came to be regarded in some sections as a plural ending; in others a diminutive. So far as I have been able to observe, *chicken* is not at present generally used as a diminutive, *little chicken* being usually employed as the equivalent of *chick*. The most general use of *chicken* is as an equivalent of *hen*; and while *hen* and *chickens* is not infrequent it is not nearly so common as *old hen* and *little chickens*.

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# INTRODUCTORY FRENCH READER.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—Many teachers who are using some one of the Whitney\* series of French Gram-

\*'Introductory French Reader' by William Dwight Whitney and M. P. Whitney, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1891. 16mo, 256 pp.

mars will welcome the appearance of this reader, especially for the sake of the full grammatical references that apply alike to all three of the grammars in the series just mentioned. Beginning students are, on the whole, more apt to make better use of such helps than those who are advanced; and it certainly saves a teacher labor to have definite references to a well-known grammar, especially if it happens to be the grammar he is using. The obvious advantage that this 'Reader' possesses for use in connection with other text-books of the Whitney collection, might be a difficulty in the way of using it with grammars by other authors. The tri-partite arrangement and the character of the material selected for each part are not unlike other favorably known collections.

Notes that are easy to use, clear, not too voluminous, a table of irregular verbs, and references from each verb as given in the vocabulary to the table, an open, attractive page—these all are commendable things. The reference catalogue of the irregular verbs is especially noted in the preface, and the hope expressed that it may lessen one of the chief difficulties met by beginners. It will do this to a certain extent, but why will not some one go further, and give a simple lexicographic treatment of the irregular verbs in an elementary reader? Let *vais*, for example, be found near the top of the *v*-column with the definition, (I) 'go, from *aller*' not "see *aller*"; and when the student has turned to *aller* a further reference meets him: "see No. 66," in some grammar or in the back part of the book he is using. The irregular verb-forms are, after all, words much like other words; for the good of those who have to master them, it may be that they have been treated too much like beings from another world.

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# A NOTE ON THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH DRAMA.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—I notice that M. Petit de Julleville in his excellent book 'le Théâtre en France,' p. 305, repeats an error often made (see 'la France littéraire,' Grimm's 'Correspon-